

THE GOLDEN SANDS OF NOME



Last year, I began melting raw gold and making tokens. The first three that I made were from gold from an unknown source. I then purchased gold from Gold King Creek in the Bonfield, and made 49 more (#4 to #52).



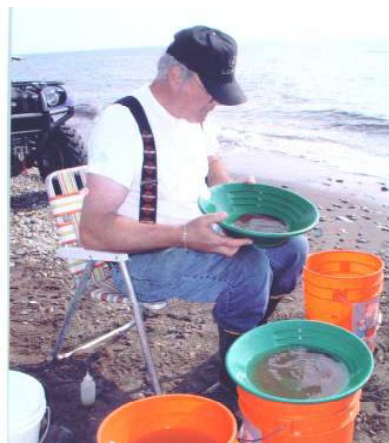
All winter I sat around the store hoping some one would bring in gold dust from the beach at Nome. I knew there was not much hope. As tourist season approached, I was hoping for any gold dust so that I could resume making my gold tokens. Getting desperate, on June 13, I gathered up whatever gold I had to pour an ingot, and had enough to make 4 more tokens (#53 to #56) from a mixture of gold from different sources.



On June 14, Rich "Pappy" Witrosky walked into the store. He had been visiting his grandchildren in Nome in May, and had worked the beaches. He had to run the hose for his water pump out over the sea ice! In the first photo to the left, you can see the pump out on the ice, connected to a small sluice box.

Last summer in warmer times, he could work in a T-shirt. The two photos below show him working with his sluice and panning the concentrate that he gets in the sluice.

He was not looking to sell any gold, but to have a jeweler make trinkets for all his grandchildren. I showed him my token, and he was intrigued, but still wanted something larger. After talking with the local jewelers and learning the costs



and problems of working with raw gold (problems are mentioned later in this article), he returned to my store. We struck up a deal and I purchased an ounce of gold from the beaches of Nome. Additionally, I agreed to strike six tokens from gold he would provide.



And that is how I can now offer our 1 DWT gold token struck from gold from the "golden sands of Nome." All carry a small "N" counterstamp on the reverse

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

This month was both exciting and disappointing. I finally purchased some gold from Nome, and initial results were satisfactory. Unfortunately, the next melt from Nome did not work out, and gold that I purchased from the 40 Mile District also did not melt into usable product. Perhaps the gold is too pure (about .900 and .884 respectively)! I have heard that it is difficult to roll out 24K gold. I find this hard to believe as much of the gold in the Middle East and Asia is nearly pure. More research is needed to determine why these two samples resulted in a brittle and porous ingot when rolled.

On a lighter note, Cliff and Sally Mishler passed through Fairbanks for a second time. They came over to our house for dinner, along with my business partner Jerry Cleworth and his wife Janice. Sally has been in real estate for a number of years, and when she saw our driveway, she asked ... in kinder terms than this... but let me paraphrase.. "What were you thinking?" Our driveway is affectionately known as the driveway from Hell (4 wheel drive and some times chains in the winter and anytime it rains). It is a bit steep, with a sharper than 90 degree corner at the bottom.

We had a pleasant, but short evening, as Cliff was flying up to Barrow in the morning (Sally took a pass on that trip). I have read the article in Numismatic News of the first part of their trip, and I am very much looking forward to the next installment. There should be come interesting comments about Barrow, and the sun not setting.

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PRICES REALIZED

Selected prices realized from eBay:

Bering River , Hoonah Pkg., 5¢, B-1a	70.00OB
Bethel , N.C. Co., 50¢, B-2b	OB95.00NB
Cordova , Club Pool Hall, 5¢, B-11a	OB90.00NB
Cordova , Cordova House, 5¢, B-14a	OB50.00NB
Cordova , Horseshoe Liq, 12½¢, B-20b	417.00
Cordova , Rosswog, 6¼¢, B-34b	OB45.00NB
Fairbanks , F&G, B-15a	125.00OB
Fairbanks , Cigar Store, 5¢, B-17a	OB95.00NB
Flat , Kruhm, \$1, B-1c	43.22
Ft. Yukon , Carter, \$5, B-3e	461.00
Haines , Chisel, 5¢, B-4a	OB295.00NB
Haines , Teddy Bear, 10¢, unlisted	18.50
Haines , Teddy Bear, 25¢, unlisted	12.25
Hawk Inlet , Harris, 25¢, B-1c	195.00OB
Iditarod , Curry, 25¢, B-1a	460.00
Ketchikan , Hotel Connell, 5¢, B-11a	OB150.00NB
Ketchikan , Smoke Shop, 25¢, B-59c	230.07
Kodiak , Club Liquor Store encased cen5	57.03
Latouche , B of T, 6¼¢, B-1a	OB150.00NB
(Nome) , One lead pencil, B-2a	44.00
Nome , B of T, 12½¢, B-8eI	89.99OB
Nome , B of T, 12½¢, B-8h	125.00OB
Nome , Lomen Bros., 25¢, B-30a	150.00OB
Nome , Mulloy, 25¢, B-33a	OB75.00NB
Nome , Polet, 50¢, B-41g	OB25.00NB
Palmer , ARRC, 5¢, B-1b	79.00
Palmer , ARRC, 5¢, B-1b	33.55
Palmer , ARRC, \$5, B-1g	280.00OB
Palmer , ARRC, \$10, B-1h	295.00
Quinhagak , Jean, 50¢, B-1b	35.00OB
Quinhagak , Jean, \$1, B-1c	35.00OB
Seward , The Branch, 12½¢, B-3b	411.78
Skagway , Mascot Saloon, 12½¢, B-17c	OB49.99NB
Skagway , Mascot Saloon, 12½¢, B-17c	61.60
Valdez , Buffet, 12½¢, B-4b	38.87
Valdez , CB Buffet, \$1, B-4cII	650.00OB
Valdez , CB Buffet, \$1, B-4cI	RLOB1,595.00NB
Valdez , CB Buffet, \$1, B-4cI	RLOB1,595.00NB
Dawson, YT , Kilgore & Landahl	OB295.00NB
Dawson, YT , B&M, 12½¢	95.00OB
AYPE , ¼ DWT	160.50RNM
AYPE , ¼ DWT	RL?OB299.00NB
AYPE , ¼ DWT	175.00
AYPE , ¼ DWT, NGC-62	OB595.00NB
AYPE , ½ DWT	170.50RNM
AYPE , ½ DWT	RL?OB329.00NB
AYPE , ½ DWT	153.50RNM
AYPE , ½ DWT, NGC-63	OB975.00NB
AYPE , 1 DWT	180.50RNM
AYPE , 1 DWT	99.95OB
Alaska Gold , 1897, 1 Pinch, round	406.00
Alaska Gold , 2 TooWah (brass?)	249.50
Alaska Gold , 2 TooWah (brass?)	314.00
AYPE , encased cent, round	31.00
AYPE , encased cent, round	58.88

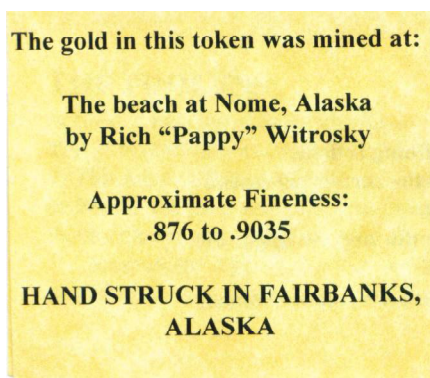
OB = Opening Bid NB = No Bid RL = relist
 RNM = Reserve Not Met R = Reserve
 BIN = Buy it now DNS = Did Not Sell

NOME GOLD, CONT.



actual size

(enlarged on the front page). The certificate of authentication has been rewritten to reflect the origin and fineness of the gold. USGS Bulletin 910-C, "Fineness of Gold From Alaska Placers," 1941 reports that beach gold from Nome ranges in fineness from .876 to .9035.



After punching out the blanks, the gold has to be softened by heating. After this was done, I punched the "N" into the blank. This way, the blank is not deformed after striking. Having counterstamped the blank with an "N", I struck the token. Just the simple act of stamping the "N" into the blank was enough to harden the blank so that the impression from the dies was not acceptable. Now, the blanks are heated before counterstamping the "N", and then again before striking.

I have been trying to make a larger, 5 DWT token. Last year I purchased additional punches with this in mind. But to use the punches, I have to pour an ingot, roll it to the correct thickness, and then punch out a blank. This requires in excess of 5 DWT, and if I have more than 5 DWT, I can pour an ingot and make the 1 DWT tokens. The question was how do I make a blank with only 5 DWT of gold?

I had tried different ways to melt 5 DWT of gold and get something resembling a blank with no success. It was "Pappy" to the rescue again. He had read in a gold prospecting magazine how to make "bush buttons." Now this is going to sound bogus, but it works. You use a potato!

What you do is this: take a slice off the bottom to make the potato lie flat, take another slice off the top, scoop out a small depression, put the gold in the depression and melt with a torch. The potato turns black, but does not burn. Once melted into a roughly round blob, I can flatten it in my rolling mill, keeping it roughly round, to the diameter that I want for a 5 DWT token. After striking, the token remains on the lower die, and I counterstamp a "5" over the 1 (see the enlargement on the front page).

I was able to make two from gold that I had left over. Our store had over an ounce, and I used that to make four more. These four are offered for sale at the end of this article. Because they are all different, all four are illustrated.

When Rich saw the 5 DWT tokens, he wanted to have those for his grandchildren. He gave me 2 ounces of gold to work with. The results were disastrous! I melted the gold in a crucible to burn off the impurities and poured it into the ingot mold. I was going to flatten it as thin as possible so I could clip off an accurate weight for the tokens.



On the first attempt, the ingot split lengthwise, in a "V" shape. The inside was porous. Two more pours and rollings resulted in a strip of gold that was porous and brittle. So brittle that a strip that was 2mm thick would break in your fingers. I took 5 DWT from one of these and melted it in a potato. The button was just as brittle as the strip and would not flatten. One last pour and rolling resulted again in a "V" split. I told "Pappy" what had happened. He said this is just the type of

NOME GOLD, CONT.

problem the jeweler had warned him about.

I have no idea why this gold was a problem, but the first Nome gold was not. Seems I learn something every time I do this. Hopefully, I will be able to figure out why this is happening, and how to prevent it and possibly even use this gold.

With the success of the 5 DWT token, I am sure that when I am bored, I will make 10 DWT (½ ounce) and 20 DWT (1 ounce) tokens!

GOLD TOKENS AVAILABLE FOR SALE:

1 DWT, #50, Gold King Creek gold \$100.00*

*This is your last chance to have a token from Gold King Creek and have a complete set of gold tokens from known locations. I assume that more locations will follow!

1 DWT #53-#55, mixed gold \$60.00

1 DWT, #59 or higher, Nome gold \$65.00



5 DWT, gold from unidentified location \$225.00

These are shown actual size. All 5 DWT contain the same amount of gold. The difference in size is caused by differing thicknesses. Please list your preference in descending order. If your preferences are 2-4-3-1, and 2 and 4 have been sold, we will ship #3

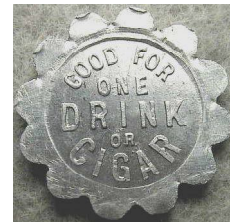
All prices are subject to change with increasing gold prices. Please include \$4 for postage and insurance per order.

This week I purchased an ounce of gold from Dome Creek in the 40 Mile District. Unfortunately, it also was brittle and porous. I really need to find out why this is happening!

FANTASY TOKENS



DILLINGHAM: Marguerite L. Bradford, Good at Bar. Aluminum, 27mm. PR - \$2536.



MT. VILLAGE: Sheppard Trading Co., Good for one drink or cigar. Aluminum, 27mm. PR - \$11.67.



WRANGELL: Grant & Lemieux, Good for one drink or cigar. Aluminum, 20mm. PR - \$96.67.

The above tokens are fantasies struck from original dies, pairing dies that were not used to strike legitimate tokens. There are a large number of these and buyers need to beware.

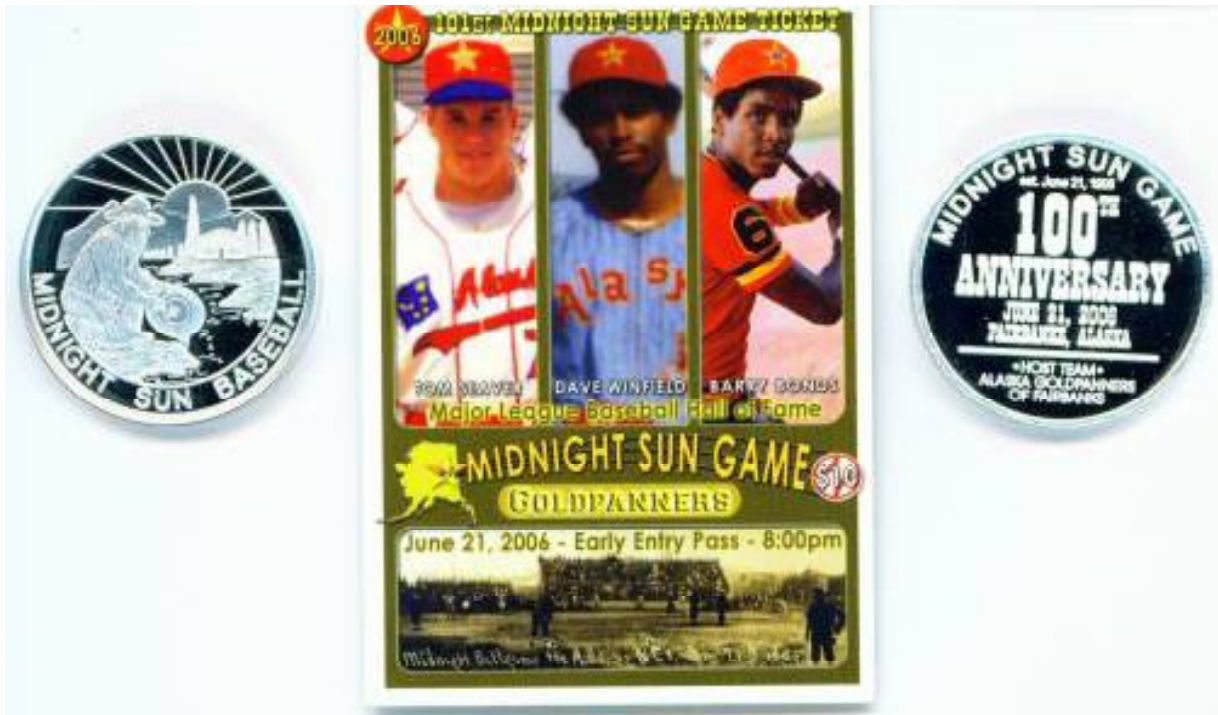
4 CORNERS, ALASKA



From an Alaska Alcoholic Beverages Commission report on the internet, April 3, 2003: 16.03/04-2115 Kincaid Grill; R.A. Levinsohn, LLC; Alan Levinsohn ? Mbr/Mgr; located at 6700 Jewel Lake Rd in Anchorage; transfer of ownership & name of restaurant/eating place license from Gesines at 4 Corners Restaurant Inc. d.b.a. Gesines at 4 Corners; backgrounds complete.

So, not a new location, but an Anchorage business.

ALASKA GOLDPANNERS BASEBALL



For the 100th anniversary of the Midnight Sun Baseball Game, the 101st game, the Goldpanners have struck 250 one ounce silver medals. These are priced at \$50 plus \$4 postage (all of the \$50 goes to the Goldpanners). We only have 2 left. Included with each will be a ticket from the Midnight Sun Game. Those who have already purchased one will find their ticket included with this newsletter. Barry Bonds is looking awfully skinny in the photo on the ticket!

INTERESTING TOKENS



From the Fred Holabird sale of Alaska and Arizona tokens described as follows: "Arizona. Maricopa. Mesa. Soapy Smith's Saloon. Soapy Smith's / Saloon / Mesa, Ariz. / L. A. Rub Stamp / GF / 12.5 / IT. Rd, br, 21mm. The saloon was open in 1907 and short lived. Considered an R-9." The winning bid was \$1,000 plus buyer's fee - \$1,150.

THE TANANA attributed to Post Falls, Idaho. This recently appeared on eBay with a \$25 opening bid. It went unsold. I asked the seller if his attribution was documented or based on where it was dug up. He replied: "Yes, it is documented and can be found in Hollis Pincock Jr.'s book Idaho Tokens For Collectors. This is his recent book. I also have it documented in Idaho Merchants Tokens 1865-1967 by Frank R. Schell. I hope this helps. If you have any other questions please feel free to ask! Take care, Mike"



Chalmquist's, dug up in Tanana. When this came in, I was all excited, until I checked "Alaska Tokens" by Ron Benice. There is an "Chanquist", but no Chalmquist. Research does not reveal a single Chalmquist in Alaska. So, a neat token with no visible means of support, unless you like the idea of a die sinker's error. Aluminum, 25.5mm.

MILITARY CHALLENGE COINS



ALASKA: 381st Intelligence Squadron, Northern Light of Freedom, Moving the Force North to Alaska, 381 Dining out. Bronze.



ALASKA: U.S. Marine Corps, 4th Recon BN, E Co., 2000. One ounce silver with gold relief. Minted by the Evergreen Mint, Anchorage.



KEFLAVIK, ICELAND: Chief Petty Officers. Black, white, red, yellow and green on bronze.



KEFLAVIK NAS, ICELAND: 85th Security Forces. White, light blue and medium blue on bronze.

TERRITORIAL DOLLAR HOLDER



From eBay: "An interesting Alaska Territorial item. Black leather holder for a Silver Dollar, for carrying as a good luck piece. Front has "Alaska Territorial Elks Association" and a facing elk with a clock between antlers. Back has "Here's Luck". Silver Dollar is not included, just put there to show size."



ENCASED QUARTERS: For the ANA convention in Milwaukee in 2007, featuring the Wisconsin quarter, a gift from Cliff Mishler. Say Cliff, is that an extra high leaf on that quarter? Darn, must be on the reverse of the other one.

PAPER POTPOURRI



ANCHORAGE: Pioneer Open House, Days of '98, December 9, 1943. Black on light blue, 150mm x 71mm (submitted by Candy Waugaman).



ALASKA: Earl D. Hillstrand, Demo(crat) for (State) House, 900 Million Legislative Promisory Note. There was an Earl Hillstrand in the Territorial and State Legislature. This note is circa 1970, and Earl is looking really young! Is this the Earl from the Territorial Legislature (serving through the State Legislature into the late 60s) or could this be a son? Dark green on white, 164mm by 63mm (submitted by Candy Waugaman).

(ANCHORAGE?): S&F Food Land, 1, 5, 10 and 10 Lucky Bucks. Green on white. These have been sitting on my computer for months. I don't remember where they came from or the size (I am sure they are shown at a reduced size). I believe Kaye Dethridge had them on eBay.

